[*Note.*—**An asterisk (*) at the commencement of a speech indicates revision by the Member.**]

II.—CALLING ATTENTION TO NEED FOR POSTPONEMENT OF RECOVERY OF GOVERNMENT LOANS IN THE NILGIRIS DISTRICT.

திரு. ஜே. மாதா கவுடர் : கனம் சபாநாயகர் அவர்களே, 'லேட் ப்ளைட்' என்னும் நோய்ப் பிடிப்பினால் நீலகிரி மாவட்டத்தில் உருளைக்கிழங்குப் பயிர் விளைச்சல் குன்றிவிட்டதன் காரணத்தால் ஓராண்டுக்கு அரசாங்கக் கடன்கள் வசூலிப்பதைத் தள்ளி வைக்கும் அவசியம் குறித்த அவசரப் பொது முக்கியத்துவம் வாய்ந்த விஷயத்தைக் கனம் பொது பணித்துறை அமைச்சர் அவர்களின் கவனத்திற்கு நான் கொண்டுவருகிறேன்.

THE HON. SRI R. VENKATARAMAN : The "Late Blight" disease on the potato crops in the Nilgiris district, started spreading in the year 1961. On the assessment made by the Board Member regarding the damage caused by the "Late Blight", the Government postponed the collection of loan instalments in fasli 1370 in the first instance and it had been extended year after year up to 1st July 1964. The "Late Blight" still continues to prevail, though not in a virulent form during the current year. As a result of the crop digging experiment on the yield of the potato crops, the Collector of Nilgiris has reported that the present straitened circumstances of the ryots in this district are not solely due to "Late Blight" which is prevailing only in a mild form. They are due to other factors also, such as, scarcity of potato seeds, want of timely rains and lack of adequate credit facilities. The amount of loans outstanding as on date is Rs. 11·85 lakhs. This amount represents the loans granted under the Agricultural Loans and Land Improvement Loans Acts, loans granted by the Agricultural Department and Soil Conservation Loans and interest thereon. 10-00 a.m.

The Collector of the Nilgiris has now suggested that the demand due for faslis 1373 to 1375 amounting to Rs. 10·25 lakhs may be ordered to be postponed further to fasli 1375 and that the remaining arrears of about Rs. 6 lakhs relating to the period prior to fasli 1373 may be ordered to be collected from 1st July 1964 for the following reasons :—

(i) As a result of the postponement of the collection of loan instalments during the years 1952–53 to 1954-55 and 1961–62 to 1963–64 due to adverse seasonal conditions, the loans disbursed during the year 1950–51 and the subsequent years are still outstanding.

(ii) As the rules require the collection of all the postponed instalment in one lump sum immediately after the period of postponement the loanees may not be in a position to pay the entire loan arrears in one lump sum on the expiry of the period of postponement and it will also render it impossible to take steps even under the Revenue Recovery Act on a distant future date, in order to recover the huge arrears.

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(iii) The several postponements have not only helped the loanees to evade payments, but have also adversely affected their repaying capacity.

(iv) The prevailing higher price for potato will enable the ryots at least to repay about 35 per cent of the arrears pending collection from 1st July 1952.

(v) The loan arrears relate not only to the loans granted for agricultural purposes but also for non-agricultural purposes, such as, construction and repair of houses, purchase of articles required for carpentry, blacksmithy, etc.

The proposal of the Collector is under examination. I may, therefore, inform the hon. Member that the "Late Blight" is now prevailing in a mild form and that the need for any further postponement of the collection of loans will be looked into carefully.

III.—ANNOUNCEMENTS.

(1) ELECTION TO THE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC ACCOUNTS.

MR. SPEAKER: I have to announce to the House that the following fourteen Members were duly nominated for election of fourteen Members of the Madras Legislative Assembly to the Committee on Public Accounts for the year 1964–65:—

1. Srimathi T. N. Anandanayaki.
2. Sri K. S. Ardhanareeswara Gounder.
3. Sri K. Cheemaichamy.
4. Pulavar K. Govindan.
5. Sri R. Govindarajulu Naidu.
6. Sri R. Krishnaswami Naidu.
7. Sri K. A. Mathialagan.
8. Sri V. R. Nedunchezhiyan.
9. Sri V. R. Periannan.
10. Sri V. Sankaran.
11. Sri T. L. Sasivarna Thevar.
12. Sri A. R. Subbiah Mudaliar.
13. Sri R. Subramaniam.
14. Sri R. V. Swaminathan.

As the number of candidates validly nominated is equal to the number of vacancies to be filled, viz., *fourteen*, I hereby declare them to have been duly elected to the Committee on Public Accounts for the year 1964–65.

The Hon. the Chief Minister, who is in charge of Finance, and the Chairman, Committee on Estimates are ex-officio members of the Committee.